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15 August 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Planning, Programming, and Budgeting
Director of Central Reference
Director of Research and Development

SUBJECT : Evaluation of the Automatic Language Processing (ALP) System

1. The ALP Processor was acquired by the Agency with the understanding that:

- a. The initial rental of the Processor would be limited to one year.
- b. This trial period would be used to test the effectiveness of the Processor as an aid to OCS/FDD operations, to experiment with other applications, and to improve the system performance, where possible within available staff resources.
- c. Data would be gathered on the performance of the ALP System and of the current manual procedures in FDC in order to evaluate the relative advantages of each process. This would be the major factor in the decision to continue or release the Processor.*

The one-year trial period ends 15 October 1966. In the past year, considerable data have been gathered to assist in an evaluation of the FDD application, experience has been gained in the use and maintenance of the Processor, several applications outside

*A distinction should be made between the Automatic Language Processor and the ALP System. The former includes the hardware and associated programs and lexicons rented from IBM; the latter includes the Processor as well as personnel and procedures that relate to it.

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the FDD area have been proposed and/or tested, and several techniques have been suggested for improved effectiveness. In short, our experience during this period has provided valuable insights into the validity of the ALP concept and its applications in the Agency.

2. Agency management has given considerable attention in the past to alternate paths that could be followed in the exploitation of computers in language processing. In spite of the efforts of the people directly involved in the ALP test over the past year, there is no clear consensus on the future of automatic language processing in the Agency. While the direction we should take does not hinge completely on the decision with respect to ALP, this is certainly one aspect of the total picture which can and should be reviewed in an orderly fashion.

3. I suggest the establishment of an ALP Evaluation Committee for the period of 22 August to 31 September 1966, to:

- (1) Constitute the mechanism for the final decision (within the authority of the components its members represent) on the disposition of the Automatic Language Processor. In the event of an affirmative decision, the Committee should also provide guidelines on future applications, improvement, and subsequent evaluation of the System.
- (2) Consist of senior officials from OCR, OCS, ORD, and O/PPB, the latter member to serve as Chairman. I suggest, also, that the Committee, in addition to calling for expert testimony from users, builders, and operators of ALP, should consider using the services of Charley [redacted]
- (3) Keep interested members of the Joint Automatic Language Processing Group informed of its discussions and ultimate decision.

4. The Committee should consider at least the following information in its deliberations:

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- a. Analysis of data gathered by FDD and OCS on ALP and manual system performance vis-a-vis costs, quality, and throughput.
- b. The studies of other potential applications of ALP, including preliminary results of tests.
- c. Hardware performance, maintainability, backup, etc.
- d. Experience in manageability of computer devices and related skills as an integral part of a production cycle.
- e. Studies of potential techniques for improving FDD manual procedures as well as all aspects of the ALP System.
- f. Plans elsewhere in the Agency and in the U.S. Government research community in automatic language processing.
- g. The IBM position on their support of research and development in automatic language processing.

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CHARLES A. BRIGGS
Director of Computer Services

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cc: Mr. [redacted]
Mr.
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